

VLR 6/1/5
NRHP 7/27/5

(Rev. 10-90)
NPS Form 10-900

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is to use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 15A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Odd Fellows Hall

Other names / site number 150-0087; Tadmore Light Lodge, IOOF No. 6184

2. Location

street & number 203 Gilbert Street not for
publication _____

city or town Blacksburg vicinity _____

state Virginia county Montgomery code 121 Zip 24060

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] Date 6/10/05

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is: removed from the National Register

 entered in the National Register other (explain): _____

 See continuation sheet. determined eligible for the National Register Signature of Keeper _____

 See continuation sheet. determined not eligible for the National Register Date of Action _____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

 No Style _____

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete _____
roof Metal _____
walls Wood _____

other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)
See attached Continuation Sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- X A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Ethnic Heritage - Black American

Period of Significance 1905 - 1955

Significant Dates 1905

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acres of Property .031 acres _____

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing
1 17 551358 2 4121003 2 _____
3 _____ 4 _____
____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title/organization: Thomas M. Sherman, Blacksburg Town Council; John R. Kern and Michael J. Pulice,
Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Roanoke Office

date April 2005

street & number: Blacksburg Town Council, 1005 East Roanoke Street telephone 540-231-8342

city or town Blacksburg state VA zip code 24060

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Trustee appointed: Aubrey Mills

street & number 945 Nellies Cave Road

city or town Blacksburg state VA

zip code 24060

Phone: 540-951-8467

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Summary Description

Odd Fellows Hall is a two-story frame structure clad in painted weatherboard siding, its simple gable roof covered by early standing-seam terne metal pans. It is sited on a small hilly lot, now encroached upon by streets, parking lots, and commercial development; located close to the busy intersection of Prices Fork Road and North Main Streets, near downtown Blacksburg and northwest of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. The building's narrow footprint covers nearly all of the small lot. Designed with a large free span room on the First Floor and the Odd Fellows' ceremonial space on the Second Floor, the Hall encompasses a total of 1,520square feet of interior floor space, evenly divided on two floors. The interior retains most of its original finishes: tongue-and-groove pine floors, plaster and lath walls, and painted beaded board ceilings. Noteworthy artifacts relating to the Odd Fellows' ceremonial functions are currently stored on the Second Floor.

Narrative Description

Odd Fellows Hall endures in remarkably good condition and with a significant percentage of its historic features and finishes intact. The historic use of the building as meeting space and as a social hall has brought predicable wear to the facility. This wear, however, helps define the character of the Hall and is integral to understanding its intensive role in the center of the New Town community for many decades. The building has remained free of major alterations and large-scale loss of architectural features. It retains a high degree of historic integrity. Some structural deterioration exists at Odd Fellows Hall. Heavy oak sill plates support the first floor faming. A recent truck collision at the northwest corner has shifted the building's west elevation wall about four inches off the foundation, and has resulted in extensive plaster damage at the first floor.

The building is simply finished, without the exuberant Queen Anne decoration that typifies many of Blacksburg's early twentieth-century frame structures. Two large meeting rooms are located at the building's interior. The large first floor room was available for use by the surrounding community, but the second floor meeting space was off-limits to those who were not members of the Odd Fellows organization. The first floor of the Hall was used weekly for a wide range of social events, including church suppers, dances, and community meetings.

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The building is designed in a simple vernacular style that is defined by function rather than by the use of superfluous decorative detail. The architectural significance of Odd Fellows Hall lies in its heavy timber construction, clean geometry, and its straightforward utilitarian design.

Exterior Description

Clad in white painted weatherboards and capped by a standing seam terne metal roof, Odd Fellows Hall presents a traditional building form that is reminiscent of simple turn-of-the-century religious structures in rural Virginia. Characterized by its narrow two-story structure and moderately pitched gable roof, the building is devoid of ornament. Although likely a function of economics rather than a deliberate style decision, the spare exterior of the building gives it a dignity that reflects its humble importance in the New Town community.

The building is oriented at an angle, although for the purposes of clarity, the elevations will be designated by the most approximate compass points. Rectangular in plan, the building measures approximately 20' wide and 38' long. The precision of the building's construction is apparent from the dimensions of the north and south elevations, and those of the east and west elevations: there is only an inch disparity among them. The narrow west elevation features the building's main entrance, identified by two double wood doors. The corresponding east elevation is blank. The long north elevation holds the building's secondary exterior entrance at the center of the First Floor. The door is flanked by window openings on each side, which are accompanied by Second Floor level window openings that are aligned over the First Floor windows. The south elevation holds four windows, two on the first level and two on the second level. Similar to the windows on the north elevation, these windows are aligned vertically. Although no shutters remain at the exterior of Odd Fellows Hall, the windows retain evidence of cast iron hinge pintels and sill receivers for shutter hardware. Several surviving wood shutters, currently located on the second floor of the Hall are historic stile and rail shutters with fixed louvers. The shutters are 1 1/2" thick. The windows at Odd Fellows Hall are uniformly-sized, two-over-two double hung wood sash windows. The window pulleys remain in place at the interior window trim, but the sash cords are missing. Removal of trim and investigation into one window's jamb pocket revealed missing sash weights as well. It is possible that the sash cords and weights were not installed as a measure of economy. All of the existing window sash will be repaired and new glazing compound will be installed.

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Each elevation of Odd Fellows Hall appears to be arranged symmetrically; however, the arrangement of bays on each elevation is slightly off-center. The west elevation's double doors, for example, are placed one foot off-center. Similarly, the openings on the north and south elevations are placed more toward the building's east end. Whether intentional or accidental, the irregularities in the building are not readily apparent and, when observed, add to the building's custom-built character.

Although the building is 100 years old, there have been remarkably few changes that have impacted the exterior of Odd Fellows hall. The removal of the louvered shutters, the replacement of the roof, and the changes cause by general deterioration and neglect have not significantly altered its historic appearance. The wood siding that clads the building appears to be original and is generally in good condition. The siding consists of regularly-sized wood weatherboards set with a 3 1/2" exposure. The boards are beveled, tapering from a base thickness of 1/2" to 1/8" at the top. The siding is secured directly to the building's wood framing without sheathing boards, and is characterized by long lengths. Wood cornerboards, 5" in width and 1" thick, receive the weatherboards at the building's four corners. The siding abuts the edges of the cornerboards, although several lengths of new cornerboards have been nailed over the originals. The original cornerboards are placed at right angles, and a 1" section of quarter round moulding is used to complete the trim. Several lengths of quarter round are missing. Damage is evident at the northwest corner of the building, where a vehicle recently collided with the structure. The cornerboards at this location were cracked and broken at this time.

The exterior window and door trim at Odd Fellows Hall is extremely simple. The window openings are framed by wood trim that is highlighted by a band of molding at the top of the length of head trim. The band of molding returns at the ends of the trim and travels back to the siding. The exterior doors are framed by trim that is similar to the trim at the windows. The main west doors are capped by a plain length of head trim that is lacking any decorative molding. The east door utilizes molding along the head trim that is identical to the molding used at the window trim.

The West Elevation

The primary elevation of Odd Fellows Hall faces west and holds the building's main entrance. The west elevation is clad with weatherboards that are in generally good repair; a portion of the

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siding below the threshold of the entrance door, however, is missing. The main entrance of the Hall is distinguished by a central set of double wood doors. The doors are intact and operable, although they bear evidence of heavy use. A small hole in the upper panel of the northern door was used for the turn key of a bell that was mounted to the interior of the door. The existing historic hardware, consists of a box lock with porcelain knobs, hinges, and an old surface-mounted deadbolt. A set of modern wood steps provides access at the main doors; the steps ascend directly to the doors without a landing. A small opening is located at the northern end of the west elevation at the first floor level. Framed by plain trim resting on a wood sill, the opening provided an access window to the small closet under the main staircase. The window shows no evidence of a sash installation, and a modern plywood door on hinges provides the interior closure. The exterior has been boarded over by a piece of plywood. A circular opening is located high in the west gable to provide ventilation for the attic space. The opening has a diameter of two feet, and has been covered on the exterior by a piece of modern screen. The placement of a circular opening in the gable accentuates the tall, narrow west elevation and adds character to the otherwise plain exterior.

The North Elevation

The north elevation is characterized by a centered first floor entrance door flanked by a window on each side. Two windows on the second floor are aligned above the first floor windows. The grade on the north elevation has risen significantly over the years, resulting in deterioration of the lower four inches of siding.

The entrance door on the north elevation is a single leaf, five-paneled wood door. The door is set above a concrete step. The door panels are arranged with two long vertical panels over a central horizontal panel, with two smaller vertical panels below. Wood boards have been nailed across the interior surface of the door to provide security. The door hardware, consists of a box lock with one surviving porcelain knob and hinges. The north elevation's windows are original units that have undergone some repair. The sashes consist of double hung, two over two units. The Second Floor windows retain most of the original shutter pintels and the sill receivers are intact.

The East Elevation

The east elevation of Odd Fellows Hall is the only elevation of the building without

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window or door openings. The grade along the east elevation slopes significantly from the north to the south, allowing nearly two feet of the concrete foundation to be visible at the southeast corner.

The South Elevation

Facing a gravel surface parking lot, the south elevation is defined by four window openings. The windows are set two per floor, and are aligned vertically. There are no door openings on the south elevation. The siding on the south elevation is generally in good condition. An area of siding beneath the first floor's southeast window, however, is missing. The four windows on the south elevation maintain their historic sash and trim. The second floor sash are weathered and will require some general repair, but the sash are basically sound.

The Roof

Odd Fellows Hall is protected by a simple gable roof. The roof features eaves that overhang each elevation, and is covered with standing seam painted terne metal pan system. The metal roofing is a historic roofing material. The plank roof decking, visible in the attic, shows evidence of numerous nails and nail holes in horizontal lines across the decking. The presence of the nail holes suggests that the roof was originally clad in wood shingles. The metal roofing retains remnants of red paint. The roof is trimmed by a plain fascia board that travels around the four sides of the roof. The eave soffits of the roof consist of modern plywood panels.

A small brick chimney rises from the south slope of the roof and served the two freestanding stoves that were historically present in the Hall. The chimney is constructed of red brick and is detailed by a simple band of corbelled brick near the chimney top. The surface of the chimney has been partially parge-coated with mortar, most likely in an attempt to reduce water infiltration through failed mortar joints. A rusted metal flue projects from the top of the chimney.

Structural Details

Odd Fellows Hall is a wood frame structure that is situated on a poured concrete foundation. The construction date of 1905 is an early date for the use of poured concrete; however, the oversized aggregate composition of the concrete, and the lack of any evidence of a brick foundation or brick piers, suggests that the concrete is the original foundation material. It may be that the presence of rock outcroppings under the Hall prevented the use of a more traditional

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foundation and footings. The concrete foundation is poured to a thickness of eight inches and was likely installed without any steel reinforcement. The foundation has survived in remarkably good shape. Wood sill plates, composed originally of true 6x6 members, are placed on the north, south, east and west sides. The north sill has been replaced with a modern 6x6 treated member. The sills appear to have been simply set on the foundation, and not secured to it. The wood sills carry the wood floor joists of the first floor as well as the wood studs of the exterior walls. The floor joists measure 8 ½" x 2 ¼" and are spaced at two feet on center. The first floor's floor joists span the full twenty feet of the building's width and are supported by a true 6x6 wood beam that extends down the length of the crawl space. The 6x6 center beam is supported on a series of wood posts, randomly spaced, that in turn rest on concrete plates. The wall framing consists of true 2x4 wood studs, spaced two feet on center. The tongue and groove wood floor is laid directly on the wood joists and measures 3 ½" wide and ¾" thick. Corner studs augmented with corner braces secure the exterior walls of the building. The second floor joists are composed of true 2x10's that are most likely set two feet on center. The deeper second floor joists are required to span the full twenty-foot width of the Hall without a center support, preserving the open character of the first floor.

The full structure of the roof is visible in the unfinished attic. The second floor ceiling joists measure 2" x 5 ½" and are set at two feet on center. The roof rafters measure 1 ¾" x 3 ¾" and are similarly set at two feet on center. Several vertical members, placed randomly, extend from the roof peak to the center of some of the ceiling joists. The wide plank roof decking is randomly sized and spaced, although a rough average of 8" wide boards that are spaced 4" apart was observed.

Interior Description

The interior rooms and spaces are simply detailed and retain a wealth of original materials and finishes. Reflecting its position as an integral component in the New Town community for more than half a century, the interior of the Hall is marked by wear and evidence of heavy use. The evidence of use, however, illustrates the central role of the building in the community and contributes to its significance. The simple interiors of the Hall were not updated and altered through the years, but instead were maintained and repaired as needed.

The First Floor

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The first floor of Odd Fellows Hall was historically used as a multi-purpose social hall. Once the scene of dances, dinners, and church functions, the social hall was subjected to the most intensive and most frequent use. The first floor is characterized by a single open space, with the enclosed staircase to the second floor placed along the north wall. Vertical tongue and groove beaded board wainscoting travels around the room on all sides. The original wood trim, wainscoting, plaster, doors, window sash, and beaded board ceiling appear to have been painted only once. A significant percentage of the original paint remains throughout the space, along with the stains and scars associated with the building's history. The signs of wear and use define the building and are integral to its historic character.

The flooring of the First Floor room consists of 3 1/2" wide tongue-and-groove boards, laid eastwest due to the orientation of the joists below. The boards are 3/4" thick and are laid directly over the joists, without a subfloor. Due to the intensive use of the space historically, it is likely that the boards were not finished and were left to weather naturally. The flooring is largely intact, but areas of damage and patches are visible at various locations throughout the room. A portion of the flooring near the north wall was removed and replaced with a plywood board to provide access to the crawl space under the building.

The first floor room is detailed by the tongue-and-groove wainscoting that is placed along each wall. The wainscoting's wood cap is placed three feet above the floor, and shoe molding composed of 1" quarter round molding anchors the bottom edge. The wainscoting is intact and is generally sound; however, an area of wainscoting below the southeast window has been damaged by water infiltration and termites. The wainscoting in this area will be replaced with new to match the existing material. Shoe molding is missing along the north wall and along part of the south wall. A length of modern molding has been installed along the west wall. The modern molding will be removed, and new molding will be installed. Modern boards that have been nailed to the wainscoting on the various walls will be removed; electrical wiring that has been laid across the wainscoting will be removed as well.

Smooth plaster walls on sawn wood lath are used to finish the interior walls above the wainscoting. The First Floor retains a great deal of its historic plaster with its original paint.

The large First Floor room is highlighted by a wood stage that is placed at the east end of the space. The stage is reached by two steps, one at the north side and one at the south side, and is floored by three sections of wood boards. The boards, some of which are over one foot wide,

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are worn and the edges have been rubbed smooth. A strip of wood, formed by a 1x2 laid flat, extends around the perimeter of the stage. Supported by a framework of true 2x4's set vertically and horizontally, the stage was built against the beaded board wainscoting that wraps the walls. The beaded board is visible in the space beneath the stage, indicating that the stage was installed some time after the room was finished. A wood apron once covered the front of the stage and concealed the underlying framing. The apron, likely formed of tongue-and-groove beaded board that matched the wainscoting, has been removed.

The building's interior chimney is placed on the south wall. The upper portion of the chimney is plastered, while beaded board wainscoting covers the lower portion. A modern wood stove is placed on a tile platform, also modern, just to the north of the chimney. A large section of brickwork and the historic plaster have been removed at the upper portion of the chimney for the installation of a new stove flue.

Access to the second floor is established through the placement of an enclosed staircase along the north wall of the main floor room. The south side of the stair's enclosing wall is faced with plaster and wainscoting, finished to match that in the remainder of the room. A door opening in the wall provides access to a small closet under the stair. The door is missing, but the receiver for the door's box lock remains in place on the east jamb trim. The closet is roughly finished, with flush horizontal wood boards placed up to wainscoting height on the west wall and unfinished horizontal beaded board on the north and south walls. Plaster finishes the wall surface above the wainscoting on the west wall; the framework of the stairs is exposed. A small access opening is placed on the west wall above the wainscoting. It is surmised that this may have been used as a ticket window when events were held in the Hall. The opening is closed by a modern plywood door on hinges and secured by a hood and eye closure. The opening is trimmed by unpainted boards. The doors and windows of the first floor are framed with a mixture of original and new wood trim. The north entrance door, the closet door, and the northwest window retain portions of their original trim, while the west entrance doors retain nearly all of the original trim. The northwest window retains an original length of apron trim; the remainder of the window trim at the northwest window and at the other first floor windows is not original. The original jamb and head trim of the doors and windows consisted of 4 1/2" wide lengths of reeded trim, accented by corner blocks. None of the original corner blocks remain in place. The jamb trim of the entrance doors rests on tall plinth blocks, all of which survive. The west doors are missing

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only the corner blocks, while the east door is missing the head trim, the west jamb trim, and the corner blocks. The original wood sills remain at most of the windows, but the sill at the southeast window is missing.

The staircase to the second floor is placed along the north wall of the first floor room and rises in the main run to a landing at the building's northwest corner. The stair then turns and continues the ascent in a short flight to the south. The stair is flanked by knee walls that are clad in narrow beaded board, similar to the First Floor ceiling. The beaded board is set horizontally and has been left unfinished. The beaded board walls are used to finish the walls to the second floor line. At the second floor, the north and west walls of the stairwell are unfinished plaster. The second floor's baseboard extends around the stairwell and is used to form the dividing line between the beaded board and the plaster. The edges of the beaded board are trimmed with delicate molding strips that match the first floor wainscoting cap. Despite the heavy use of the building over the years, the molding strips have remained intact. The stair treads and risers have been left unfinished and exhibit signs of wear and use that are characteristic of the building. The stairway is 2'-9" wide and utilizes treads that are 9" deep. The risers of the stair are generally 7 1/2" high; the treads and risers consist of 3/4" thick wood boards. The stair landing is formed of tongue-and-groove floorboards laid in the north-south direction. There are no handrails along the stair walls. The stair is in generally good condition.

The First Floor ceiling is formed of narrow beaded board that retains its historic paint finish. The ceiling is in good condition and does not exhibit any significant areas of deterioration.

The First Floor's electrical system consists of modern receptacles that have been mounted on the floor and on the wood wainscoting. Surface mounted wiring has been installed to service the receptacles and switches. The electrical panel box is located in the closet under the stairs. Modern electrical junction boxes have been installed along the center of the ceiling in the eastwest direction. Remnants of the original knob and tube wiring system is evident at the western end of the ceiling.

The Second Floor

The second floor of the building is divided into three distinct spaces. The western end of the second floor consists of the vestibule, which includes access to the stairway, and a storeroom

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that was used for the storage of articles relating to the Odd Fellows. The majority of the second floor consists of the historic Odd Fellows meeting room. The walls and ceiling of the vestibule and the storeroom have been left unfinished. The meeting room retains a uniform coat of white paint; the paint is believed to be modern. Similar to the first floor, the signs of wear and use that characterize the second floor define the building and are integral to its historic character.

Vestibule

The vestibule occupies most of the Second Floor's western end. The dark space is characterized by its lack of windows, which would have added to the mystery and ceremony of entrance into the Odd Fellows meeting room. The stairway climbs to the second floor and provides access at the northern end of the vestibule. The stairwell is open and lacks a railing; there does not appear to be any evidence that a railing was located at the stairwell originally. The north and west walls consist of unfinished plaster, while the east and south walls are formed by wood plank walls. The plaster walls are anchored by an 8 1/2" high baseboard. There does not appear to be any evidence of shoe molding in the vestibule. The plank walls consist of tongue and groove boards that are set vertically. The framing for the east wall is exposed on the vestibule side; the framing for the south wall is exposed inside the storeroom. The plank partition walls are non-load bearing walls and consist of a minimum of framing. Shoe moulding is positioned along the bottom edge of the eastern partition wall. Two sections of the plank wall at the staircase have been removed, however, these sections remain in the building. The framing and the planks that are exposed in the vestibule area are unfinished. The ceiling of the vestibule consists of narrow beaded board has been left unfinished. A very small attic hatch is located at the western side of the ceiling and provides the only access point to the Hall's attic. The hatch consists of a panel of beaded board that has been anchored to several random pieces of tongue-and-groove wood.

The historic knob and tube wiring remains on the west wall of the vestibule and extends across the vestibule ceiling. An exposed light bulb and socket hang on a braided cord from the center of the ceiling. The modern light switch on the west wall will be removed, and a new concealed electrical system will be installed.

Storeroom

The storeroom is a simply finished space that is positioned in the southwest corner of the

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second floor. The room is defined by an unfinished plaster wall on the west and south sides,

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and by wood plank walls on the north and east sides. A wood baseboard trims the plaster walls and does not hold any evidence of shoe moulding. A narrow door opening provides access to the storeroom from the vestibule. The door consists of a two-panel wood unit with simple metal knobs. The door is painted, but the remainder of the plank walls have been left unfinished. A portion of the tongue-and-groove boards that form the north wall have been removed and have been replaced with sheets of plywood. The beaded board ceiling of the storeroom is intact.

Odd Fellows Meeting Room

The main meeting room occupies the majority of the second floor of Odd Fellows Hall. The space is finished with plaster walls, a wood floor, and a beaded board wood ceiling. The room is entered from the west through a single door opening, and is lit by four windows. The building's chimney is set between the two windows on the south wall. The room and its finishes are in basically good condition. The flooring of the meeting room is identical to that of the first floor. Formed by 3 ½" wide tongue-and-groove boards, the flooring is laid in the east-west direction. The floor is intact, but several areas appear to have a degree of instability. The floor at the north side of the chimney retains a ghost stain of the platform that once supported the room's wood stove. A fragment of linoleum remains at the southeast corner of the floor. There is no visible evidence that the floor was stained or varnished. Smooth plaster walls define the meeting room on the north, south, and east sides. The west wall is formed by the plank partition wall that separates the meeting room from the vestibule to the west. The plaster walls, set on sawn wood lath, are unornamented except for an 8 ½" tall wood baseboard with a 1" band of quarter round shoe molding. Shoe molding exists along the base of the west plank wall as well. All of the shoe molding along the meeting room walls is intact.

The chimney is placed near the center of the meeting room's south wall. The masonry chimney was used for the room's freestanding wood stove. A capped stovepipe in the upper portion of the chimney remains in place. The plaster on the masonry surface of the chimney remains in good shape, but the shoe molding that originally trimmed the bottom the chimney baseboard is missing.

The door opening to the meeting room is placed in the west wall. The door is missing, although hinge mortises remain in the frame to indicate the swing of the door. The door opening is

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untrimmed; the plank walls do not appear to hold any evidence that trim was present originally. A wood sill remains at the door opening.

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The ceiling of the second floor meeting room is consistent with the remainder of the building and is formed by narrow, painted, beaded board. The lighting of the room is provided by the original 1920's-era knob and tube wiring system that remains in place along the center of the meeting room's ceiling. The exposed knob and tube system retains the historic light bulb sockets, which are hung on braided cords.

8. Statement of Significance

Blacksburg's Odd Fellows Hall served throughout the early-mid-twentieth century as the social center of the local African-American community, a tight-knit group of resourceful, hardworking, individuals who were shut out of other social organizations in the rural south by bigotry and prejudice. For many years it was the only place in town where black people could socialize without feeling and/or acting subservient to the majority white people. The Hall stands as one of the last remaining structures of New Town, a once-vibrant African-American community located northwest of Blacksburg's downtown commercial area and the sprawling Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. It is therefore eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, at the local level, under Criterion A, in the area of Black Ethnic Heritage. Its period of significance begins with its construction in 1905 and ends in 1955.

Acknowledgements

The following individuals provided information contained in this document: Scott Gardner, Barbara Pendergrass, Joanne Sutphin, Aubrey Mills, Walter Price, Bill Brown, Bea Walker, and Ethel Dobbins.

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Narrative History

In May 1905 six trustees for the Order of Odd Fellows and six trustees for the Order of St. Lukes purchased a 30-ft by 45-ft lot in the west of the town of Blacksburg “for the purpose of organizing a mutual Society to be known as the Odd Fellows and St. Lukes Union.”¹ Records for the Blacksburg Odd Fellows Lodge, known as Tadmire Light Lodge #6184, indicate that the Odd Fellows trustees had decided to purchase the lot by March 1905 and that they had voted to form a joint-stock company with St. Luke to share equally in the cost of purchase. The lodge initially paid rent for an alternate facility, but by August 1905 they had collected \$220 cash. The lodge soon established a building committee and by February 1907 the Blacksburg Odd Fellows Lodge Hall was constructed and ready for painting.² Thus began the Blacksburg Odd Fellows Lodge, which would serve for six decades as a focal point of social identity and service for the African American community in and around Blacksburg.

The Blacksburg Odd Fellows Hall drew upon the tradition of the secret fraternal Order of Odd Fellows, which had established an African American Lodge in Alexandria, Virginia, in the mid-1840s.³ The mutual aid society of the Independent Order of St. Luke was founded in Baltimore in 1867 and subsequently led by Maggie Walker in Richmond, who assumed control of the organization by 1899. Walker and St. Luke appealed specifically to women, sold insurance to members, and opened the St. Luke Penny Savings Bank in Richmond in 1903.⁴

Once founded, the Blacksburg Odd Fellows Hall in 1905 met twice a month, fined members 75 cents for getting drunk and 6 cents for laughing and talking, and studied how to conduct a lodge. In 1906 the lodge buried a member, purchased lodge regalia, and paid the well-known Rev. L. L. Downing of Roanoke to preach a sermon before a lodge supper that featured “chickens, bread, three cakes, and two freezers of cream.” The following year the Blacksburg Odd Fellows Hall invited lodges from elsewhere to attend a rally. Suppers, sermons, and rallies continued, as did discussion of social behavior, such as smoking and chewing in the lodge room. In 1910 the Odd Fellows discussed a joint meeting with St. Luke and held a joint supper. The Odd Fellows Lodge and the Household of Ruth, apparently a sister organization to the Odd Fellows Lodge, kept a membership book that listed five of the original trustees as laborers, one as a farmer, and one as a barber.⁵

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By 1927 the Blacksburg Odd Fellows Hall had a checking account with the National Bank of Blacksburg with an account balance that ranged from \$160 in 1930, to \$150 in 1948, to \$210 in 1950. The Household of Ruth had its own National Bank of Blacksburg account of \$115 in 1922, and almost \$500 in 1927. The Household of Ruth continued to hold annual banquets. It paid Rev. Caldwell \$3 to preach and had a grand turnout at the Baptist Church. In 1949 it paid brother Owen \$50 for his wife's funeral arrangements.⁶

Blacksburg and Montgomery County residents have recently recounted memories of the Blacksburg Odd Fellows Hall as an important gathering point for their African American community. Aubrey Mills remembered from the mid-1950s that the Blacksburg Odd Fellows Hall was a very sacred organization and that to join was a step up for a young person. Membership included an insurance policy for each member and provided the only place Mills and colleagues could go for entertainment. Beatrice Walker discussed her membership in St. Luke at the Hall. She remembered that St. Luke sold insurance to blacks and that members wore special outfits with white on their heads when they attended funerals. St. Luke, like the Odd Fellows, was a special organization that you had to be invited to join. The Odd Fellows and St. Luke joined in hosting social events, dinners, fashion shows, bingo parties, mock weddings, and dances. Square dances were held with string music and sometimes a drum. When good bands played, the crowd would overflow the hall. Membership provided a close-knit organization for blacks in Blacksburg, sometimes joined by blacks from Christiansburg and Wake Forest, and all members were like one big family.⁷

By the late 1960s, when desegregation came to Blacksburg and Montgomery County, the Blacksburg Odd Fellows Hall ceased to function as a center for African American fraternal organizations. For the next four decades the hall was used for storage and woodworking. The Town of Blacksburg will acquire title to the Blacksburg Odd Fellows Hall upon its designation in the Virginia Landmarks Register, and the property will be dedicated to collecting, preserving, educating, and exhibiting the contributions of black citizens in Blacksburg.⁸

Endnotes

1. Montgomery County Circuit Court, Deed Book 53, p. 532.
2. Blacksburg Odd Fellows Lodge, Box I (Virginia Tech Special Collections, Ms. 88-009).

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3. Elizabeth Calvit, *Odd Fellows Hall, Alexandria, Virginia*, National Register Nomination, Site Number 100-5015-0005 (Richmond: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 1994). The present African American Odd Fellows Hall in Alexandria dates to 1869-1870.
4. Ann Alexander, *Race Man: The Rise and Fall of the "Fighting Editor," John Mitchell, Jr.* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), chap. 11, "The Lure of Fraternalism," pp. 149-150, 155-156.
5. Blacksburg Odd Fellows Lodge, Boxes I and III (Virginia Tech Special Collections, Ms. 88-009).
6. Blacksburg Odd Fellows Lodge, Box III (Virginia Tech Special Collections, Ms. 88-009).
7. "Members of Blacksburg's African American Community Share Their Stories of Times at the Odd Fellows Hall," transcribed lecture at Blacksburg Town Council Chambers, November 4, 2004, sponsored by the Blacksburg Museum and by Historic Smithfield Plantation.
8. Tom Sherman, *Odd Fellows Hall, Blacksburg*, Preliminary Information Form, Site Number 150-0087 (Richmond: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 2004).

9. Bibliography

Alexander, Ann. *Race Man: The Rise and Fall of the "Fighting Editor," John Mitchell, Jr.* Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002.

Blacksburg Odd Fellows Lodge. Virginia Tech Special Collections, Ms. 88-009.

Calvit, Elizabeth. *Odd Fellows Hall, Alexandria, Virginia*. National Register nomination, Site Number 100-5015-0005. Richmond: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 1994.

Commonwealth Architects, Richmond Virginia. "Odd Fellows Hall Feasibility Study," March, 2005.

"Members of Blacksburg's African American Community Share Their Stories of Times at the Odd Fellows Hall." Transcribed lecture at Blacksburg Town Council Chambers, November 4, 2004, sponsored by the Blacksburg Museum and by Historic Smithfield Plantation.

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Montgomery County Circuit Court. Deed Book 53. Christiansburg, Virginia.

Rodriguez, Cristina. *Odd Fellows Hall, Blacksburg*. Unpublished student paper sponsored by Virginia Tech, 2004. Town of Blacksburg City Hall.

Sherman, Tom. *Odd Fellows Hall, Blacksburg*. Preliminary Information Form, Site Number 150-0087. Richmond: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 2004.

10. Geographic Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated parcel is identified as Parcel ID: 070816, Map Number: 226- A140
Town of Blacksburg, Montgomery County, Virginia; Deed Book: 0053 Deed Page: 0532.

Boundary Justification

The Odd Fellows Hall occupies the entire 0.031-acre nominated parcel.

Photographs

All Photos are of:

Odd Fellows Hall
Blacksburg, Virginia

Date: March, 2005

Photographer: Michael J. Pulice

Negative # 22104, 22105

Location of Negatives: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond

1. VIEW OF: Front (west) elevation

Photo 1 of 10, Negative # 22104

Section _ photo, continued__ **Page** __17__

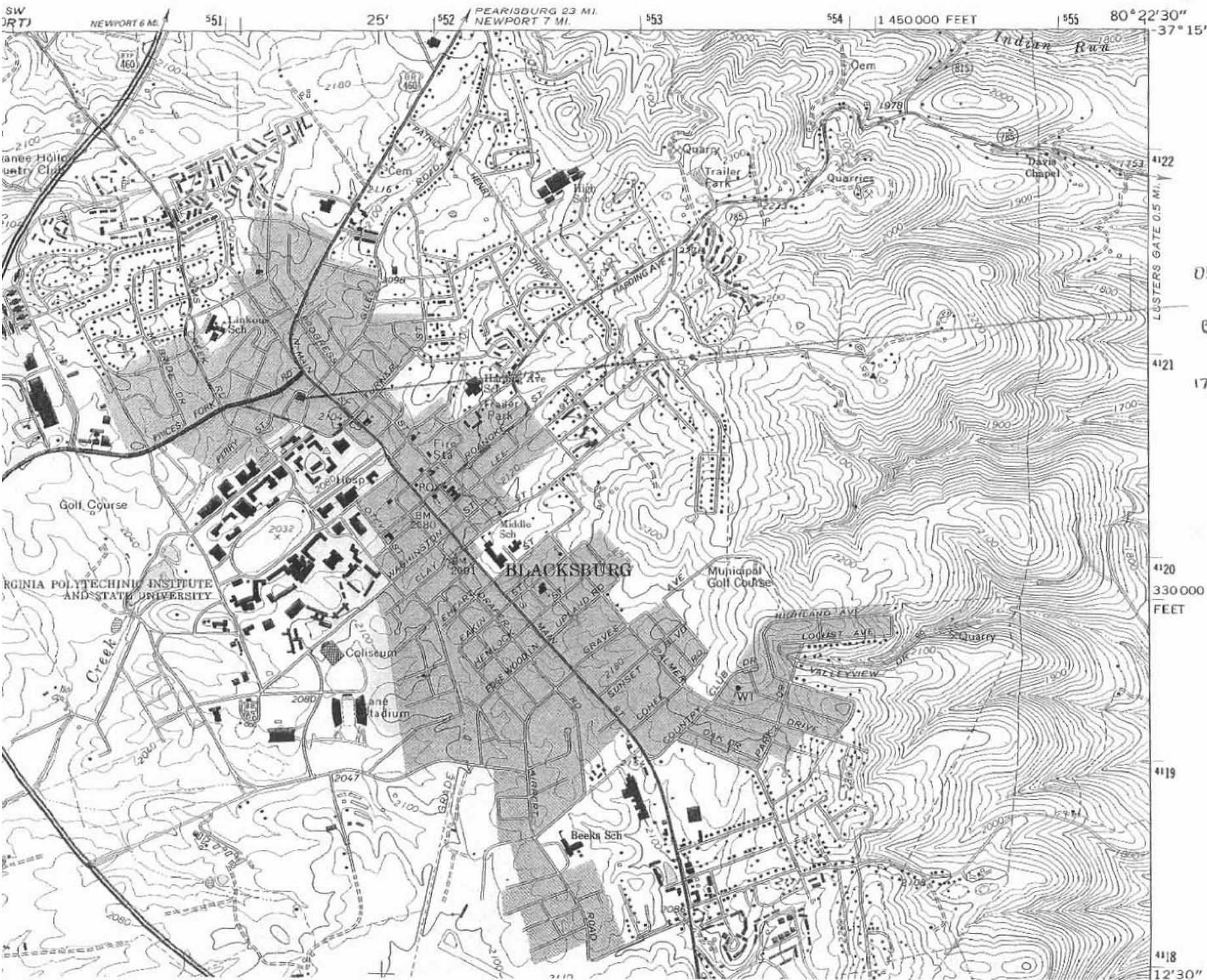
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Blacksburg, Virginia**

2. VIEW OF: Front (west) elevation (alternate angle)
Photo 2 of 10, Negative # 22104
3. VIEW OF: Front (west) elevation (alternate angle)
Photo 3 of 10, Negative # 22104
4. VIEW OF: North elevation
Photo 4 of 10, Negative # 22104
5. VIEW OF: East and north elevations
Photo 5 of 10, Negative # 22104
6. VIEW OF: First floor, interior, facing east
Photo 6 of 10, Negative # 22105
7. VIEW OF: First floor, interior, facing NE
Photo 7 of 10, Negative # 22105
8. VIEW OF: First floor, interior, facing SE
Photo 8 of 10, Negative # 22105
9. VIEW OF: First floor, interior, facing west
Photo 9 of 10, Negative # 22105
10. VIEW OF: Second floor, interior, facing west
Photo 10 of 10, Negative # 22105

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ODD FELLOWS
 HALL
 BLACKSBURG,
 VA
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4122
 4121
 4120
 4119
 4118

1 450 000 FEET
 80° 22' 30"
 37° 15'

330 000
 FEET

12' 30"